

# Addressing Holocaust Denial, Distortion and Trivialization

*Teaching  
Aid*

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# Addressing Holocaust Denial, Distortion and Trivialization

Teachers in the OSCE region have reported encountering anti-Semitic ideas when teaching about the Holocaust.<sup>1</sup> Anti-Semitism exists today as prejudice in which Jews are confronted with hostility and treated as inhuman, or as an out-group. It can be manifested in individuals as attitudes, in culture and various forms of expression.<sup>2</sup> Anti-Semitic sentiments can fuel resistance to the topic of the Holocaust and may manifest as denial, distortion or trivialization of historical facts.

Sometimes, for example, where the Holocaust is not explored fully as part of the school curriculum, young people may distort the Holocaust in ignorance of the historical facts, or they may deny it as a form of adolescent provocation or rejection of an established narrative. Whatever lies behind Holocaust denial and distortion, it is often accompanied by or promotes classic anti-Semitic themes, such as accusations of greed, power, deceptiveness and criminality.

The purpose of this teaching aid is to provide a better understanding of these expressions of anti-Semitism and to support teachers in countering the following:

- resistance to lessons about and from the Holocaust;
- misinformation about the Holocaust among students; and
- incongruous or flawed parallels made between what the Jews experienced during the Holocaust and how other groups are suffering or have suffered.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Eckmann, S. Doyle and J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J. (eds.), *Research in Teaching and Learning About the Holocaust: A Dialogue Beyond Borders* (Berlin: Metropole Verlag, 2017), p. 233, <[https://holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/research\\_in\\_teaching\\_and\\_learning\\_about\\_the\\_holocaust\\_web.pdf](https://holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/research_in_teaching_and_learning_about_the_holocaust_web.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> *Addressing Anti-Semitism Through Education: Guidelines for Policymakers* (Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR, 2018), p. 12, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/383089>>.

In 2013, the member countries of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) agreed on a Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion:

“Holocaust denial is discourse and propaganda that deny the historical reality and the extent of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis and their accomplices during World War II, known as the Holocaust or the Shoah. Holocaust denial refers specifically to any attempt to claim that the Holocaust/Shoah did not take place.

Holocaust denial may include publicly denying or calling into doubt the use of principal mechanisms of destruction (such as gas chambers, mass shooting, starvation and torture) or the intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people.

Holocaust denial in its various forms is an expression of antisemitism. The attempt to deny the gen-

ocide of the Jews is an effort to exonerate National Socialism and antisemitism from guilt or responsibility in the genocide of the Jewish people. Forms of Holocaust denial also include blaming the Jews for either exaggerating or creating the Shoah for political or financial gain as if the Shoah itself was the result of a conspiracy plotted by the Jews. In this, the goal is to make the Jews culpable and antisemitism once again legitimate.

The goals of Holocaust denial often are the rehabilitation of an explicit antisemitism and the promotion of political ideologies and conditions suitable for the advent of the very type of event it denies.”

**SOURCE:** For the full definition see IHRA’s “Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion”, adopted on 10 October, 2013, at: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>

## Background

The following terms are frequently used to describe the methods of Holocaust denial or distortion:

- **Historical revisionism:** advocating a review of a certain interpretation of historical events based on new evidence or information.<sup>3</sup>
- **Historical “negationism” or denial:** denying that an event took place, or downplaying its scale and impact.<sup>4</sup>

During World War II, the Nazis and their allies started to promote the idea that the genocide of Jews was not happening, that the gas chambers did not exist and that the number of Jewish victims was much lower than six million. This type of Holocaust denial or “negationism” continues today, and aims to present the Nazi regime and its collaborators in a favourable light and erase any memory of the horrors that occurred.

The process of coming to terms with the Holocaust has, in some countries, resulted in what has been defined as “secondary anti-Semitism”, which refers to the notion that the very presence of Jews reminds others of the Holocaust and thereby evokes feelings of guilt about it, for which Jews are blamed.<sup>5</sup> Secondary antisemitism allows speakers to express anti-Semitic sentiments indirectly and is usually considered a reaction to

<sup>3</sup> Ronald J. Berger, *Fathoming the Holocaust: A Social Problems Approach* (Aldine Transaction, 2002), p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Some historians of the Holocaust have noted that Holocaust denial often masquerades as revisionism – a legitimate form of historical critique. See: Omer Bartov, “Introduction” in Omer Bartov (ed.), *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, and Aftermath* (Routledge, 2000), pp. 10-12.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Schönbach, *Reaktionen auf die antisemitische Welle im Winter 1959/60* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), p. 80.

feelings of guilt that challenge one's sense of a positive national identity.

Furthermore, processes of historical revisionism can sometimes omit or manipulate facts in order to serve certain narratives of national identity that are more psychologically comfortable or politically expedient. However, denying that there were those who collaborated with the Nazis is a distortion of the facts and dishonours the memory of the six million Jews who were killed during the Holocaust.

In many cases, the aim of Holocaust denial is to challenge the history of Jewish people's

suffering during the war. This is also the aim of efforts to trivialize what happened. It can be motivated by hatred of Jews or victimhood competition, and builds on the claim that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated by Jews as part of a plot to advance Jewish interests. There are conspiracy theories circulating that claim that the "hoax" of the Holocaust was created to benefit or advance the interests of the state of Israel, an idea often instrumentalized within anti-Zionist discourse. Holocaust deniers depend on, and reinforce, anti-Semitic ideas.

Holocaust denial takes many forms and, in some cases, can be seen as part of an "anti-

establishment" movement that aims to mobilize youth through popular culture. For example, a French "comedian" has used a narrative whereby Jews and Israel are depicted as the devil manipulating the "system", and who must be resisted. This is a common and long-standing anti-Semitic trope.<sup>6</sup> Adherence to these ideas is symbolized by a hand gesture called

For a timeline of Holocaust denial, see: "Holocaust Denial: Key Dates", United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10008003>>.

For the main sources of information about the Holocaust used during the trials of Nazi perpetrators after the war, see: "Evidence from the Holocaust", United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/combating-holocaust-denial-evidence-of-the-holocaust-presented-at-nuremberg?series=20792>

"The primary motivation for most deniers is anti-Semitism, and for them the Holocaust is an infuriatingly inconvenient fact of history." Source: Walter Reich, "Erasing the Holocaust", The New York Times, 11 July 1993.

<sup>6</sup> These actions led to convictions in Belgium in relation to anti-Semitic speech and in France in relation to incitement to racial hatred under the 1990 Gayssot Act.

the “quenelle”, which is circulated in photos through social media and often in front of Holocaust memorial or Jewish religious sites.<sup>7</sup>

The murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust is the most widely documented genocide in history. During the course of the Holocaust, the Nazis and their allies kept meticulous records, including hundreds of millions of pages of documentation that outlined the planning and execution of this atrocity. There is also a vast amount of film and photographic documentation of the aftermath of the Holocaust, including the liberation of the concentration camps, mass graves being uncovered, innumerable eyewitness accounts and testimonials from Holocaust survivors.

Despite this extensive documentation, Holocaust denial persists today. It is frequently used to attract new followers to neo-Nazi or other extremist movements. It is important to note that, while there is no consensus in the OSCE

as to whether speech should be criminalized, denial of the Holocaust is a criminal offence in several OSCE participating States.<sup>8</sup>

Effective education about the Holocaust should enable students to identify and reject messages of denial and distortion of historical facts. Educators should discuss the motivations behind using Holocaust denial as a propaganda tool. This is essential because Holocaust deniers spread falsehoods and misinformation that can appear reasonable to an uninformed reader. It is important

for both educators and students to acquire skills that allow them to articulate concise answers and refute denial claims when they encounter them.

It may be counterproductive in many settings to emphasize victim suffering in an effort to evoke sympathetic reactions and reduce prejudice.<sup>9</sup> Teachers can help minimize the risk of secondary anti-Semitism by teaching about the Holocaust in a non-accusatory manner and empowering learners to actively address contemporary anti-Semitism.

**UN General Assembly Resolution 61/255:**

“1. *Condemns without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust;*  
2. *Urges all Member States unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to this end.*”

**SOURCE:** UN General Assembly, *Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on Holocaust denial*, on 26 January 2007, A/RES/61/255, <<https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/res61.shtml>>.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes called an inverted Nazi salute, this gesture became an international news story in 2013, experiencing a surge in interest on Google, after several high-profile professional athletes used it (see: “Quenelle”, Google Trends, <<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2014-01-01%202014-12-31&q=quenelle>>). For media discussion in France, see, for example: “«Quenelle», comment un geste antisémite est devenu un emblème [‘Quenelle’: how an anti-Semitic gesture is becoming an emblem]”, *Le Monde*, 11 December 2013 (in French), <[https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/12/11/quenelle-comment-un-geste-provocateur-est-devenu-un-embleme\\_3528089\\_823448.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/12/11/quenelle-comment-un-geste-provocateur-est-devenu-un-embleme_3528089_823448.html)>.

<sup>8</sup> Professor Michael J. Bazyler, *Holocaust Denial Laws and Other Legislation Criminalizing Promotion of Nazism*, Yad Vashem website, <<https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/holocaust-antisemitism/holocaust-denial-laws.html>>.

<sup>9</sup> R. Imhoff and R. Banse, “Ongoing Victim Suffering Increases Prejudice: The Case of Secondary Anti-Semitism”, *Psychological Science*, Vol. 20, No. 12, 2009, pp. 1443-1447.

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# Classroom Strategies for Addressing Holocaust Denial

Regardless of the nature of Holocaust denial, distortion or trivialization that may surface in the classroom, teachers have a responsibility and opportunity to address this complex topic. Teachers need to strategically consider their pedagogical approach to ensure that it has the potential to transform any resistance to the subject from students into an appreciation for the lessons that this collective trauma in modern history can offer society today.

The following section provides some pedagogical tools to support teachers in their efforts to address this complex issue.

## What to do if ... ?

**...someone remarks, “But [...] group was just as much a victim of the Nazis as the Jews”?**

It is vitally important to acknowledge all victims of the Nazi atrocities. There were many victims, each with their own distinct and terrifying experience. It is helpful to make clear from the beginning who was persecuted under National Socialism and why, and to include reference to the different groups in your teaching about this period.<sup>10</sup>

The Nazi ideology was violent and toxic, mostly notably defined by its theory of race in which the German “Aryan” race was considered superior to all others and in need of protection from so-called “biological threats”.

In line with the Nazi “racial theory”, the Roma and Sinti were considered to be racially inferior, and seen as “asocials” (i.e.,

falling outside what Nazis considered to be “normal” society). They were targeted on racial grounds and subjected to internment, deportation, forced labour, shootings and sent to death camps, in what became the Roma genocide. Their fate closely paralleled that of the Jewish people.<sup>11</sup>

Poles, and the Slavic and so-called Asiatic peoples of the Soviet Union were also considered “racially inferior”. Their intellectual, cultural and political elites were targeted for mass murder. During the winter of 1941-1942, around two-million Soviet prisoners of war died due to the dire conditions they were intentionally being kept under.<sup>12</sup> Under Nazi occupation, Poles were subjected to forced labour, deportation and incarceration in concentration camps.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The workshop “Nazi Ideology and Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution” led by Dr. William Frederick Meinecke, Jr., available on the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, emphasizes the primacy of the Jews as victims of Nazi terror, discusses Nazi intent, and explains how and why additional groups were targeted, <https://www.ushmm.org/educators/online-workshop/guest-lecture-nazi-ideology-and-victims/overview>.

<sup>11</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Genocide of European Roma (Gypsies), 1939-1945”, <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/genocide-of-european-roma-gypsies-1939-1945>>; and “Sinti and Roma: Victims of the Nazi Era”, <<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/students/learning-materials-and-resources/sinti-and-roma-victims-of-the-nazi-era>>.

<sup>12</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Mosaic of Victims: In Depth”, <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/mosaic-of-victims-in-depth>>.

<sup>13</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Polish Victims”, <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/polish-victims>>.



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Institutionalized people with disabilities, children included, were targeted for mass murder in Nazi Germany.<sup>14</sup> Homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and so-called "asocials," as well as real or perceived repeat criminal offenders were persecuted and incarcerated in concentration camps, very often resulting in death. Real or perceived political opponents were also persecuted, interned in concentration camps or murdered.<sup>15</sup>

Jews were singularly targeted by the Nazis and their allies for systematic and deliberate physical annihilation. The Nazis used the code term "Final Solution" to refer to these extermination plans that ultimately aimed for the annihilation of all European Jews.<sup>16</sup> Jews were classified by the Nazis as the priority "enemy." The Nazis and their allies succeeded in killing two thirds of all European Jews, including over a million Jewish children.<sup>17</sup> These ideological aspects make the Holocaust a unique, unprecedented and unparalleled event in modern history.

Understanding what might be behind a person's refusal or resistance to acknowledging the extent of the horrors suffered by the Jews in the Holocaust will help you to respond effectively in this situation. Possible reasons are outlined in the following paragraphs, alongside suggested responses:

*A need for recognition of the suffering experienced by their own family or people*

It is possible that this response is informed by anger, frustration or resentment at what is perceived as insufficient recognition of the suffering experienced by another victim group. Recognizing the many victims of Nazi ideology can make students more open to empathy with the Jewish people for the severity of what they experienced during this period.

Consider asking students to research their own family background from the time of World War II. Ask them to reflect on the wartime reality faced by

their ancestors, and perhaps even to open up a conversation within the family about their experiences. If their family migrated to Europe from another region of the world, ask about how their family might have fared under the Nazis. Would they have been perceived and protected as part of the "superior race"?

*Resistance to perceiving Jews as victims because of a perception of or attachment to the idea of Jews as persecutors*

Try to understand what is at the core of this resistance:

- Is this resistance linked to information, possibly oversimplified or biased, about historical or contemporary circumstances?
- Could it be influenced by, or even have roots in, anti-Semitic prejudice, such as conspiracy theories?

This will help you determine the best approach. You may need to:

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<sup>14</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "'Euthanasia' Killings": <<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/students/learning-materials-and-resources/mentally-and-physically-handicapped-victims-of-the-nazi-era/euthanasia-killings>>.

<sup>15</sup> Genocide of European Roma, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *op. cit.*, note 12.

<sup>16</sup> "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question" was a set of plans presented by SS General Reinhard Heydrich chief of the Reich Security Main Office to top Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942. It laid out the plans of Nazi Germany to annihilate 11 million European Jews, including from the parts of Europe not controlled by Nazi Germany and their allies. See: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Wannsee Conference and the 'Final Solution'", <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/wannsee-conference-and-the-final-solution>>.

<sup>17</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Children during the Holocaust", <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/children-during-the-holocaust?series=19126>>.



For more information, see ODIHR's teaching aids no. 3 and no. 4. "Addressing Anti-Semitic Stereotypes and Prejudice" and "Challenging Conspiracy Theories".

- Explain how the Holocaust affected Jews and deconstruct any anti-Semitic prejudices.
- Provide more comprehensive and accurate information about a particular circumstance in which Jews are perceived to be oppressors.

Factual accounts of the atrocities are difficult to digest, and should be delivered to students at levels of details appropriate for their age and maturity.

**...someone says that the suffering of Jews during the Holocaust is the same as the suffering of other people or group of people whose rights are being infringed upon today?**

Students' empathy for a group of people who are suffering injustice and human rights violations can sometimes lead them to compare contemporary human rights violations and injustice to the Holocaust. It is important to recognize this empathy and acknowledge what can be atrocities

experienced by many people and groups of people around the world.

Without minimizing the struggles of any other people or group, it is equally important to convey that the Holocaust is an unparalleled event in history for the reasons mentioned above.

Additionally, understanding the specific elements of the definition and the origin of the term "genocide" is also helpful in explaining the magnitude of the Holocaust when it is being compared with other types of human rights violations. The term was coined in 1943 by the Polish Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, who combined the Greek word "genos" (race or tribe) with the Latin word "cide" (to kill). Lemkin's efforts paved the way to the adoption of the UN Convention on Genocide in December 1948, which came into effect in January 1951. In the Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed **with intent**

**to destroy**, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>18</sup>

**...someone says, "Hitler should have finished the job"?**

This statement may be revealing more extreme anti-Semitism, or it may have been said as a provocation in class, to get attention. The response to it should be shaped by the motivation and influences driving the

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II (9 December 1948), <<https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>>. This was enforced by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (see: Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Article II (31 January 2010), <<https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/8732d6/pdf>>) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (see: Updated Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Article IV (September 2009), <[http://www.icty.org/x/file/Legal%20Library/Statute/statute\\_sept09\\_en.pdf](http://www.icty.org/x/file/Legal%20Library/Statute/statute_sept09_en.pdf)>), who ruled respectively that the massacres in Rwanda (1994) and at Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995) were genocides.

## Activity

Spend some time with the class looking at how Jews took part in different parts of life in your town, country or in Europe throughout the ages – before the Holocaust and after it. Developing an under-

standing of what the Jewish presence has meant for Europe's development over hundreds of years can help students to appreciate the significance of the loss of two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

statement. It could be informative to explore the statement further, while taking care not to give extremist views a credible voice in class, by asking what would be gained in such a world? Most likely, exposing the student's reasoning behind this statement will show it to be flawed, but the answers will help you to determine how deeply rooted this person's belief is in a particular ideology, political agenda or prejudice. Once you have more clarity as to the underlying causes of this statement, it will be easier to decide what kind of follow-up would be most appropriate.

You may also decide that it is most appropriate not to give the student an opportunity to expand on her or his views. In

this case, let the class know that statements like these, which disrespect victims, or call for violence against any group of people, will not be tolerated. The statement, and other students' reaction to it, can be an indication that a deliberate and phased approach is needed to address anti-Semitism in the classroom. Try to have a private conversation with this student to better understand what underpins her or his beliefs. In certain OSCE countries, it may be necessary for the student(s) to be made aware that some forms of hate speech or denial of the Holocaust are forbidden by law.

**...a student insists that the reality of the Holocaust is somehow different, e.g., fewer people were killed?**

If a student in the class expresses opinions that distort or trivialize the reality of the Holocaust, use her or his opinion as a "teachable moment". Without putting the student on the defence, try to understand her or his source of information. It may be that the student is operating from her or his own family history of suffering or persecution.

An educational approach, perhaps in co-ordination with family, social workers or other members of the school's staff, may be sufficient if the student:

- is open to other views;
- appears to have superficial knowledge; and
- has a range of friends who hold different viewpoints.

It is important to understand the source of information or inspiration for a student's expression of Holocaust distortion, trivialization or denial, as it may also indicate an exposure to, or involvement in extremist activities. If this is the case, it is better to address the problem early on to prevent any further escalation, such as violent behaviour. You may want to consult with a relevant contact point or specialist in extremism in your school or district for advice on which indicators are serious and which are less cause for concern.

Try to identify what is at stake for the student when he or she insists on minimizing or denying the facts of the Holocaust. How would recognizing the experience of the Jewish people challenge the student's life or worldview?

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# Resources and Materials for Further Reading

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) offers several sets of educational resources. See: “Educational Materials”, IHRA, [www.holocaustremembrance.com/index.php/educational-materials](http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/index.php/educational-materials).

To find your nearest Holocaust resource organization, memorial site or museum, see also the IHRA International Directory: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/itfdirectory/organization>.

ODIHR offers several teaching guidelines and resources for addressing anti-Semitism through Holocaust education including *Education on the Holocaust and on Anti-Semitism: An Overview and Analysis of Educational Approaches* (Warsaw: OACE/ODIHR, 2005), [www.osce.org/odihr/18818](http://www.osce.org/odihr/18818).

For books providing background on Holocaust denial, see:

Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying The Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); and

Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Assassins Of Memory: Essays on the Denial of the Holocaust*, translated by Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

Yad Vashem provides the largest repository of information on the Holocaust, including easy access to digital collections, e-learning for professionals, a database of Shoah victims’ names and a wealth of historical information in several languages: [www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org).

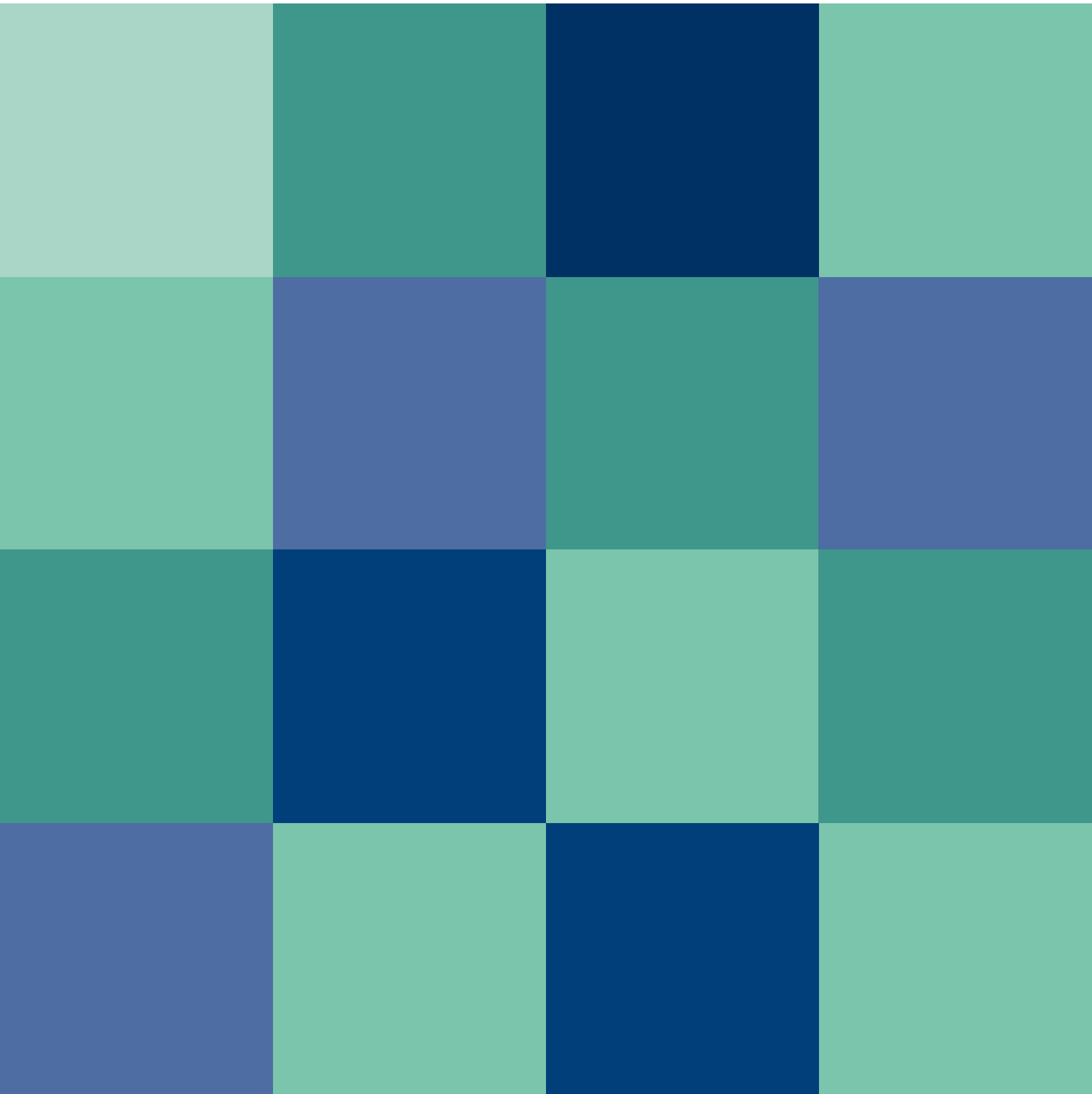
Genocide Watch is an excellent online resource for understanding genocides past and present: [www.genocidewatch.org](http://www.genocidewatch.org).

Echoes and Reflections provides extensive downloadable curricular resources and online learning opportunities: [www.echoesandreflections.org](http://www.echoesandreflections.org).

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website offers online workshops on “Teaching about the Holocaust”, “Nazi Ideology and Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution”, and “Personal Testimony”, as well as numerous lesson plans for teachers and an annotated Glossary of Neo-Nazi and White Supremacist Terms and Symbol, see: [www.ushmm.org/educators/online-workshop](http://www.ushmm.org/educators/online-workshop); [www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans](http://www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans); and [www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/origins-of-neo-nazi-and-white-supremacist-terms-and-symbols](http://www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/origins-of-neo-nazi-and-white-supremacist-terms-and-symbols).

Mémorial de la Shoah provides numerous resources for educators, including a Multimedia Encyclopedia and Frequently Asked Questions for primary and secondary school teachers, see: [www.memorialdelashoah.org/en/education-training/references-for-teachers.html](http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/en/education-training/references-for-teachers.html).

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum website offers many resources, including downloadable publications and an extensive series of e-learning courses: [www.auschwitz.org](http://www.auschwitz.org); and <http://auschwitz.org/en/education>.



# SOME WERE NEIGHBORS

## CHOICE, HUMAN BEHAVIOR & THE HOLOCAUST

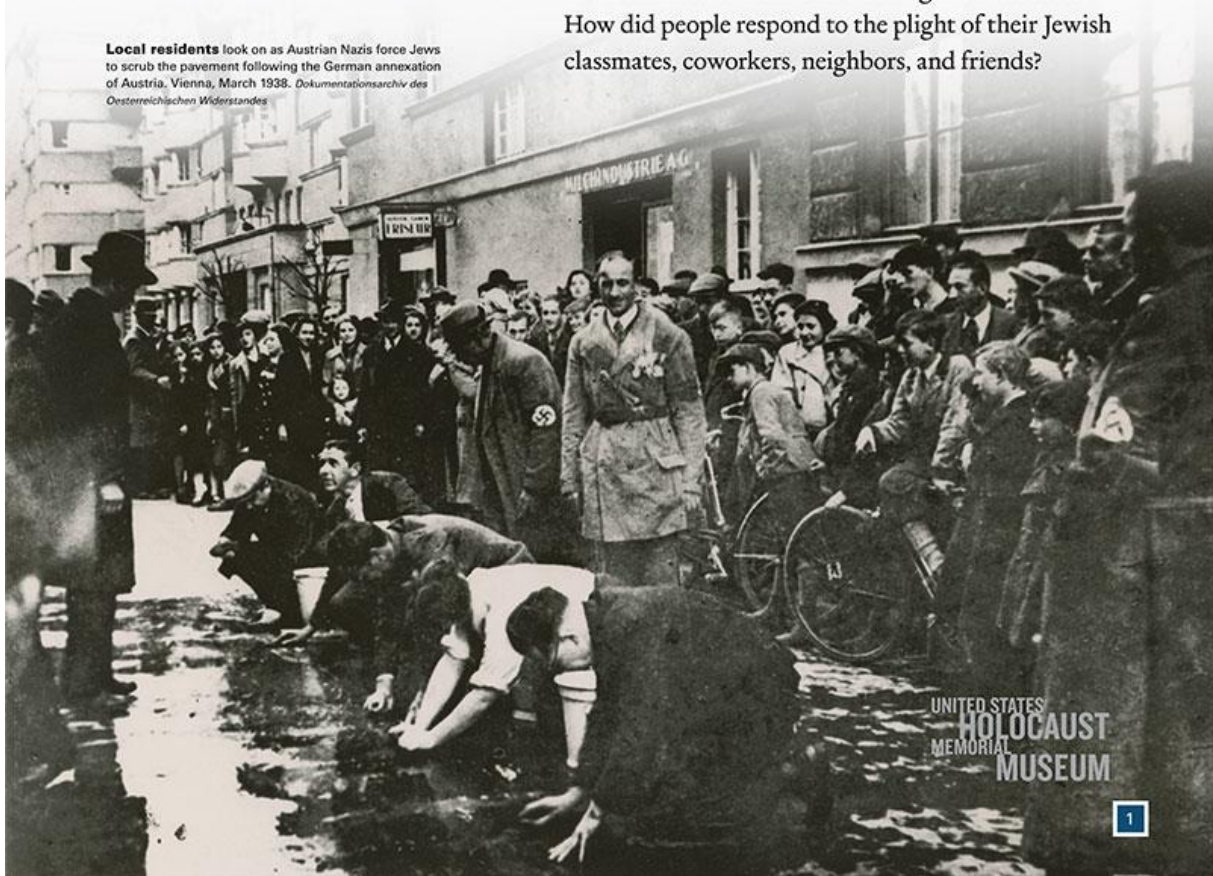
How was the Holocaust possible?

The central role of Adolf Hitler and other Nazi leaders is indisputable, but they depended on countless others. What role did ordinary people play? Why were there some zealous participants in the persecution of Jews, while most simply went along or joined in? Why did so few help the victims?

Within Nazi Germany and across German-dominated Europe, people behaved in a variety of ways, from small acts of solidarity with victims to active rescue efforts and from toleration of anti-Jewish measures to eager collaboration with Nazi perpetrators.

What motives and pressures influenced the choices and behaviors of individuals during the Holocaust? How did people respond to the plight of their Jewish classmates, coworkers, neighbors, and friends?

**Local residents** look on as Austrian Nazis force Jews to scrub the pavement following the German annexation of Austria, Vienna, March 1938. *Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes*



UNITED STATES  
HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL  
MUSEUM





31 January 2019

Speech by Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibition "Some Were Neighbors / Einige waren Nachbarn" on the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of National Socialism at the German Bundestag

[Check against delivery]

Saul Friedländer concluded his moving speech today by recalling the words of Hans von Dohnanyi, who, when asked about the reasons for resisting, spoke of the "path that a decent person inevitably takes". One month before the end of the war, Hans von Dohnanyi was sentenced to death in a summary trial and executed at Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the environs of Berlin.

A decent person.

Had they been asked in 1945, most Germans would probably have described themselves as decent. Awareness amongst people of the personal responsibility they bore was rare – and expressions of remorse even rarer. Instead, for a long time, people saw themselves as victims. They felt that they had been seduced by Hitler and his propaganda. That they had been forced to take part by means of repression, threats and violence. Many Germans at the time were able to salve their consciences by pinning the blame for war and genocide, for the total political, economic and moral collapse of their country, solely on the National Socialist leaders.

But decency is about more than simply the absence of legal guilt or political responsibility. Indeed decency is more than just an ethos. Decency means acting according to a set of firmly anchored and internalized benchmarks defining what is right and proper. One of the characteristics of oppressive regimes is that they manage to dislocate these benchmarks.

Today, we have a fairly accurate picture of the support which existed for the National-Socialist dictatorship – and also of civil resistance. Yet – according to a study carried out – the belief that members of one's own family were amongst the helpers is just as widespread as the acknowledgement that one's own family members included perpetrators.

Perpetrators, tacit supporters, profiteers. It is the seemingly total lack of empathy which most shocks us when confronted with the deeds of perpetrators and tacit supporters amongst "normal people". It seems to us beyond comprehension: people denouncing neighbors, acquaintances, colleagues, taking part in boycotts and looting, exploiting the situation to their own financial advantage. People complicit in persecution, deportation and killing.

Whatever the various motives may have been in individual cases and regardless of whether those concerned were Germans or accomplices in the territories under occupation or in allied states – the cause was always the same: the war of aggression and annihilation unleashed by Germany. The systematic mass murder of the European Jews, motivated by a racial ideology, was conceived and its implementation planned here. Along with the murder of all the other minorities and ethnic groups viewed as “unworthy of life” by the National Socialists.

At the same time, there were those who helped the persecuted. They hid Jews and their families, facilitated their escape, protected them. These were the “silent heroes”. They are estimated to have numbered several tens of thousands across the German Reich – they were many, yet still far too few. They were not morally infallible and not all of them were driven by the purest of motives alone. They were people who had retained their inner compass. Probably only a minority defined what they did in terms of political resistance. And yet, through their actions, they defied the despotism of the National Socialist regime. They are so important as role models today because they show us the good of which humans are capable – even when faced with the threat of evil. They remind us that we always have a certain scope of action available to us. That taking the path of decency is sometimes difficult and, in the context of a dictatorship, even dangerous: but it remains possible.

Ms. Bloomfield, I would like to thank you and the Holocaust Memorial Museum and I would also like to offer my thanks to all those who helped make this exhibition possible.

From today, it is on show for the first time in Germany, having previously been successfully displayed on a number of occasions in the USA. The exhibition is thus shaped by an outside perspective on German and European history. In some places, this may distinguish it from our specific German perspective. Yet its message is unequivocal. This message is summed up by a sentence from Elie Wiesel. As a Holocaust survivor and one of the founders of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, he stressed in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech that “One person of integrity can make a difference.” That one, all-important difference. The responsibility for making that difference lies with each one of us.



Thank you, J.P.!  
Yahoo / inbox

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**George E. Hellman**, USHMM [planned\\_giving@ushmm.mydonorimpact.com](mailto:planned_giving@ushmm.mydonorimpact.com)

To: J.P. van den Wittenboer

Sat, Aug 22 – 2020 at 3:00 PM

Dear J.P.,

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions with us and for letting us know that you have left a gift to the Museum in your will, estate plan, or by beneficiary designation.

Your support of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum plays an important role in our mission to secure permanent relevance of Holocaust memory and education in our constantly changing world.

We will be in touch with you soon about our Legacy of Light Society, our way of recognizing your thoughtful contribution to help secure the Museum's future. We hope you will take a minute to complete our online Gift Notification Form. Information that you voluntarily provide about your gift affirms that our work matters to you, that what we do is important enough to be honored by your legacy gift, and that you trust us to be good stewards of your legacy.

As we all carry-on in spite of the ever-changing situation and the challenges we face brought on by the current global health crisis, we at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum want to thank you again for your ongoing support of our timeless mission. We hope you know how much we value your continued dedication to, and partnership with, our institution.

Even though our physical doors are currently closed, our critical work in a world with increasing Holocaust denial, and an alarming rise in deadly racism and antisemitism, continues. We therefore greatly appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback with us, as your input helps us secure the permanent relevance of Holocaust memory and education in our constantly changing world.

Sincerely,

George E. Hellman, JD  
Associate Deputy Chief Development Officer,  
Planned Giving and Endowments

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)  
202-488-6591

# Intermediary Foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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## REGISTERED POST

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Associate Deputy Chief Development Officer Planned Giving and Endowments  
Planned Giving and Endowments George E. Hellman, JD

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, DC 20024-2126

UNITED STATES

RE: DONATION

Mierlo, January 5 - 2021

Dear Mr. Hellman,

We send you the Annual Report 2020 of our foundation IFUD of Human Rights on data DVD-rom, (pdf-file). In the Annual Report you can find the information about the donation to the USHMM Museum.

Adolf Hitler called the national anthem "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" on 1 August 1937 "the song that was sung for us Germans on most sacred revelation". From 1940 the Horst Wessel-song was added to the Deutschland-song each time. Millions of people sang themselves, Germany and the "Ostmark" included in "Her Blood and her grave". It came as no surprise that in 1945 the Allies in Germany, both songs, like all National-socialist songs forbidden.

The coupling of the "Deutschlandlied" with the "Horst-Wessel-Lied" during the Nazi era seriously damaged (lyrics and melody) of Joseph Haydn and the lyrics of Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben. The German national anthem reminds too much of the Nazis. I want them to stop. Legal: First under Dutch law with a notarial deed, and then by means of an European Enforcement Order, in the Member States of the EU as well as Germany. [ the concept of 'uncontested claims' should cover all situations in which a creditor, given the verified absence of any dispute by the debtor as to the nature or extent of a pecuniary claim, has obtained either a court decision against that debtor] REGULATION (EC) No 805/2004 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 April 2004 creating a European Enforcement Order for uncontested claims.

Human rights and the Holocaust is used selectively at times and places that suits/suited the Dutch state itself. Anything that does not fit directly in their stable is automatically refused. In this way, international treaties and laws are also set aside. Everything revolves around maintaining the status quo and international trade. They protect each other, "State corporate crime".

The financial possibilities of the foundation "IFUD of Human Rights" to take action against the powerful Dutch state is minimal. We -IFUD of Human Rights together with Audio-Rarities- call on the Dutch State to take serious measures to stop all undemocratic tendencies towards all possible means. This case concerns deliberately undemocratic, discriminatory and under the rule of law unworthy acts and/or omissions by the State of the Netherlands. It cannot be attributed to the coincidental concurrence of circumstances. The fact that the Dutch government has allocated more than 8.5 million euros for the establishment of the Holocaust Museum in Amsterdam does not mean that it is the to tolerate (also) the photoshopped images of dignitaries from the Dutch government provided with swastikas, SS-signs and Hitler mustaches that appear online. IFUD of Human Rights has already written several times to change the government's mind about this, to stop this and actually start actions.

Everything runs according to the Dutch legal system, no German or American law necessary. The Dutch state has always been reluctant to contest it. A lawsuit against the Dutch State is necessary before the civil court in The Hague to obtain a "judgment in absentia". This must be done with a Dutch lawyer.

- the most recent information we sent to the Dutch State dates from January 2- 2020, and can be found on page 591 of the annual report.
- The letters by Wim Kok concerning Hitler's Inferno and the German national anthem can be found on page 569 - 570 of the annual report.
- The donation to the USHMM can be read on pages 182 / 222 / 225 / 226 and 227 of the annual report.

The museum plays a key role in putting the Dutch State under pressure, more than IFUD of Human Rights and Audio-Rarities can do. The Dutch State is clearly abusing its dominant position as a state. Although the foundation has had everything excellently documented in a notarial deed.

The financial overview of the foundation and Audio-Rarities can be found on page 968.

What actions can the USHMM start:

- The USHMM can send a letter to the Prime Minister in The Hague about the abuse,
- The USHMM can help to get media attention for this case and publish it,
- The USHMM may be able to help arrange an attorney for the case.

Yours Sincerely  
IFUD of Human Rights  
Chairman  
J.P. van den Wittenboer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.P. van den Wittenboer', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Data-DvD-rom (Annual report IFUD of Human Rights 2020)

# “Some were neighbors”

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/some-were-neighbors>

<https://www.un.org/en/page/some-were-neighbours-choice-human-behaviour-and-holocaust>

<http://somereneighbors.ushmm.org/>

# USHMM Some Were Neighbors

USHMM / UN

2019

(education and non-commercial)

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INDUSTRIALISTS IN THE THIRD REICH

Books Reviews

## Hell's Cartel, By Diarmuid Jeffreys

**independent.co.uk**

**Christopher Hirst**

Saturday 13 July 2013

comments

This impressive book explores how the fourth largest industrial concern in the world switched from energetic capitalism to servicing the Nazi war machine.

A cartel of six German chemical companies formed in 1926, IG Farben (Its full name translates as Community of Interests of Dye-Making Companies) used slave labour to operate a synthetic fuel plant at Auschwitz and made an estimated 10,000 kilos of Zyklon B for gas chambers.

At the Nuremburg trials, the manufacturers of the poison claimed ignorance and were released. The cartel was broken up and its constituent companies, including Bayer, Hoechst, BASF and Agfa, resumed business. Amazing.

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/bib144157>

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Book:

**Corporate Crime in the Pharmaceutical Industry** (Routledge Revivals)

By John Braithwaite

Edition 1st Edition

First Published 1984

London

Routledge

Pages 440

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Dissertations and Theses Dissertations and Theses

5-7-1997

**The Persistence of Elites and the Legacy of I.G. Farben, A.G.**

Robert Arthur Reinert  
Portland State University  
Recommended Citation

Reinert, Robert Arthur, "The Persistence of Elites and the Legacy of I.G. Farben, A.G." (1997).  
Dissertations  
and Theses. Paper 5302.

THE PERSISTENCE OF ELITES AND  
THE LEGACY OF I.G. FARBEN, A.G.

by

Robert Arthur Reinert

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

ID

HISTORY

Portland State University

1997

ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Robert Arthur Reinert for the Master of Arts in History  
presented May 7, 1997.

Title: The Persistence of Elites and the Legacy of LG. Farben, A.G. ..

On a massive scale, German business elites linked their professional ambitions to the affairs of the Nazi State. By 1937, the chemical giant, I.G. Farben, became completely "Nazified" and provided Hitler with materials which were essential to conduct war. With its monopoly over the manufacture of critical wartime products and global business interests, LG. Farben became one of the most powerful companies in the world during World War II, and an integral part of the Third Reich power structure. The conglomerate also provoked hostile mergers within the conquered "territories" of the German Reich, and constructed one of the largest privately-owned synthetic oil and rubber factories in the world at Auschwitz, where extensive use was made of slave labor. After World War II, companies like I.G. Farben faced the four-power occupation policies of de-Nazification and decartelization. Yet due in large part to the impending threat of Communism, key policies of the occupation governments were weakened or rendered inoperative. These same industries recovered swiftly and expanded production into foreign and domestic markets; indeed, LG. Farben's three successor companies are now each bigger than their original parent company. Company executives tried at Nuremberg for their crimes and found guilty were given sentences of eight years or less, and many business leaders were able to resurrect their careers. Like many German firms of that era, LG. Farben typifies the way in which Germany's top business leaders exploited the resources available to them and adapted their political allegiances during and after World War II to maintain their power.

Many believe that political interests drive business interests, when in fact, the case of LG. Farben suggests a reciprocal influence between these sectors, and greater corporate influence during the Third Reich than is widely known. Particularly under an expansionary dictatorship, the state may be used by elites as an instrument to build and hoard capital, allowing elites to compete effectively on a global scale, and industry serves as the engine which fuels the territorial ambitions of the state.

<https://archive.org/details/the-persistence-of-elites-and-the-legacy-of-ig-farben-ag>

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Book: **Carriere nazi's**

by: Helmut Ortner

Just Publishers

2018

paperback

207 pages

Dutch translation

<https://archive.org/details/carriere-nazis>

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**The Rosenberg Files:** German Elite after 1945 and their Nazi-Past

<https://archive.org/details/the-rosenburg-files>

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## **Fourth Reich**

The term Fourth Reich is used in scientific studies and on social media to refer to a possible continuation of

the Third Reich of the Nazis and industrialists, which would then be the EU -under democratic cover-. Into a new "Fourth Reich".

historical documents:

1)The 1944 "Red House report", plans to set up a new Fourth Reich, after the fall of the Third Reich.

2)The FCO 30/1048 report, the plan to bring all decision making under the direction of Brussels.

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## **Walter Hallstein**

<https://archive.org/details/walter-hallstein>

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Link to **annual report IFUD of Human Rights 2020**

<https://archive.org/details/annual-report-ifud-of-human-rights-2020>

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